

97-84112-26

Huckel, Oliver

The higher education and
the common people

Amherst [Mass.]

1897

97-84112-26

MASTER NEGATIVE #

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
PRESERVATION DIVISION

BIBLIOGRAPHIC MICROFORM TARGET

ORIGINAL MATERIAL AS FILMED - EXISTING BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD

308

Z

Box 437

Huckel, Oliver, 1864-1940.

The higher education and the common people:
some thoughts on the educational movement that
founded Amherst college and Mount Holyoke col-
lege, by Oliver Huckel ... Address delivered at
a union service of the First church and the
colleges of Amherst in commemoration of the
centennial of Mary Lyon, February 28, 1897.
Amherst, Printed for Alumnae of Mount Holyoke,
1897.

26 p.

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: Reproductions may not be made without permission from Columbia University Libraries.

TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATA

FILM SIZE: 35mmREDUCTION RATIO: 9:1IMAGE PLACEMENT: IA ☒ IIBDATE FILMED: 6-6-97INITIALS: PBTRACKING #: 25060

FILMED BY PRESERVATION RESOURCES, BETHLEHEM, PA.

THE HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE COMMON PEOPLE:

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE
EDUCATIONAL MOVEMENT
THAT FOUNDED AMHERST
COLLEGE AND MOUNT
HOLYOKE COLLEGE.

By OLIVER HUCKEL.
Minister First Church Amherst.

*An Address delivered at a Union Service
of the First Church and the Colleges of
Amherst in commemoration of the centen-
nial of Mary Lyon, February 28, 1897.*

308

Z

Box 437

AMHERST:
Printed for Alumnae of Mount Holyoke.
1897.

I.

That was a striking scene when the first structure of Amherst College, the old South College, was about to be erected. The people of Amherst turned out with great enthusiasm to build it. They gave the materials; they did the work with their own hands. Many of them camped on the ground and labored almost day and night. "The scene," as described by the lexicographer Noah Webster, an eye-witness and by Dr. Tyler the historian of the College, "seems more like a romance than a reality, —more like a chapter from the miraculous history of the Israelites in the Old Testament, such, for example, as the building of the Tabernacle, or the Temple, than an event in our nineteenth century. For, not only did the people have a mind to work but they also, like the Israelites of old, felt that they were building the Lord's house." It was only ninety days, before the work was done from corner-stone to roof-tree. "It seemed" exclaims President Humphrey "it seemed more like magic than the work of craftsmen."

The scene at Amherst was almost duplicated fifteen years later in the building of Mount Holyoke College. This also was a people's movement, inaugurated and sustained by the common people. The first building of Mount Holyoke was a free-will offering of the people, made up of little gifts, of materials and furnishings and of money from six cents to a thousand dollars but no

gift greater than that, collected by one earnest woman, born in the hill town of Buckland, who believed in the common people and appealed to them. The work at South Hadley did not have as many actual hands engaged upon it, it was not quite so picturesque a scene as the former one at Amherst, but the new building rose almost as magically, certainly as majestically, under the touch of that one woman with a people's prayers and gifts behind her. She is remembered as being everywhere at that building,—almost omnipresent and omniscient. One workman says that Mary Lyon saw every single nail that was driven,—she herself confesses that her whole life and heart was in the work of building, that her head for months was full of "joice, bricks, closets and hinges" as later it was full of "bread, tin-dippers and clothes-pins." But she consecrated every brick to the Lord, and she gave it all, as the people gave it, for a school of Christ, for a house of the Lord.

This illustrates, in striking way, the persistence of the Puritan idea. It illustrates the early New England passion for religion and education; the basic sentiment of that unique life, the double reverence for liberty and law, human and divine; the stern conscience that continually was flowering into a finer and loftier culture. Just how the manifestation came about, here in these western hills, is a most interesting study. But Amherst and South Hadley are the chief, if not the only, *monumental* evidences of it.

The movement which planted Amherst College and Mount Holyoke College was virtually the same,—a great popular uprising,—an educational uprising. What astonishes one is that such a splendid work should have been

done by a people having the scanty material resources of the hill towns and valley towns of this region. There was never a great amount of money here. It was *the people* who did it by their sacrifices.

A visit last summer to the museum at Old Deerfield helped me to understand perhaps a little more clearly how it was that such a life and such scantiness of resources could bring forth such marvellous results. That quaint museum is the most fascinating history possible of the old time life of this region. Every one of the three floors is crowded with revelations. It is a three volume novel, thrilling with heroic romance. It shows exactly what the life was. No indications of any riches or opulence, not a sign, but full of the evidences of heart wealth, of home happiness, of brain culture.

The richest grapes, it is said, often come from the scantiest soils, and on severe and rocky slopes the trees are often of toughest fibre. "The vines of Rüdesheim and Johannisberg cannot be grown in the fatness of gardens, and the cedars of Lebanon disdain the level of marsh and meadow." And so these hill towns were the regions where sturdy Christian men toiled and tilled and tithed, some of them ten times tithed their poor rough farms, and planned great things for God. Our cities, our state and our nation owe these hill towns of Massachusetts a distinct debt of gratitude which shall some day be fully and wisely recognized.

There came another vision of this thing in a fine note of appreciation of the heroic element in these hill towns in that recent book "The Whence and the Whither of Man" written by one who knows and loves these western hills. The picture that he gives of the country church

in this region is nobly true and makes plain life fuller of splendid dignity. "There is" he says "in the character of these people the granite of the eternal hills and in their hearts the sunshine of God. Their money may look small on the collector's plate, but God sees the real immensity of the gift in the self-denial that it cost." It is true. These are the kind of people that furnish the moral backbone and unswerving integrity for greater lives; they are the material that God uses for conquering kingdoms and establishing empires;—these common people to whose heart if we only keep close, we keep close to the heart of God.

These common people,—they were commonsense and commonwealth. These sturdy Americans of western Massachusetts,—farmers, merchants, lawyers, teachers, ministers,—were stalwart democrats in simplicity of life and freedom from convention, but in fineness of feeling and in dignity of spirit, they were the veriest aristocrats,—if aristocratic means truly what it means etymologically,—the best. It was the same brave blood and dauntless will that had founded Plymouth and Boston, taking a new lease of life under new pioneer conditions but with the same old divine loftiness of purpose.

These common people were a people rich in faith, noble in ambitions, gentle in blood, unswerving in sense of right and worth, unconquerable in Puritan persistence and Pilgrim perseverance. They were a race of noblemen striding the furrows of the field, a race of sovereigns in the parliament of town meetings, a race of priests and philosophers in the sanctities of school and church.

II.

It was from such a people as this, and in the initial stir of a wide and deep religious movement that Mary Lyon came. The movement was a *phenomenal* movement in these hill towns of western Massachusetts. It was a popular uprising; it was a silent revolution; it was a spontaneous outburst of religious faith and missionary consecration that founded Amherst College and Mount Holyoke College. The primary and avowed ambition of both institutions was to increase religious effectiveness, and to enlarge noble service.

Mary Lyon was in a sense a product of this wide and intense preparatory movement among a heroic people; she had by inheritance the spirit of sacrifice for God and humanity and when her own time came she was a leader in the movement. The movement did not originate with her; but at one of its crises it crystallized in her. She was the one woman in the movement who splendidly concreted it and made it practical and effective by the strong wisdom of her brain, the consecration of her heart, and the boundless energy of her hand and will. What she accomplished is "A Plain Tale from the Hills" more marvellous and heroic than any that Rudyard Kipling ever conceived.

There were prejudices against her in that day and in this. One, that she was a masculine sort of a woman, too self-assertive, not womanly; another, that she was a religious fanatic, inquisitorial, introspective, righteous overmuch; another, that she was a hard nature, narrow and unsympathetic, without womanly tenderness and without the sense of joy and beauty in life, in short, a practical, a progressive, but unattractive character.

One who reads carefully the record of her life, and especially her letters, one who reads and hears the testimonies of those who knew her and especially of her own pupils, will have to revise the prejudices which have grown up largely by exaggerated traditions and grotesque caricatures. Her own letters and the testimony of her own girls and friends reveal her as a most womanly woman, and not only as a womanly woman, but as one who loved life with a rare joy and delight, who believed in a frolic health, who loved music and painting and beautiful scenery, and strangely enough who had in the midst of her intense seriousness a most fine and keen sense of humor. This was the true Mary Lyon. She was a womanly woman of large heart and broad brain. But besides this was an extraordinary woman.

Our dear Dr. Tyler whom we honor as our Amherst historian has also put upon record in his semi-centennial address as President of the Board of Trustees of Mount Holyoke, a fine tribute to her genius.

"It is well" he writes, "that she were not like ordinary women. If she had not been quite extraordinary, both in her powers and in her virtues; if she had not been almost superhuman in her courage and strength, in her patience and perseverance, in her faith and hope, in her unselfishness and unworldliness, in her self-denial and self-sacrifice, in her consecration to the higher education of woman and to the service of the Master, in her capacity for planning and executing, for organizing and training,—she never would have accomplished the work which was given her to do."

Now put a woman of this unique stamp and splendid type into the midst of the social and educational condi-

tions of the early part of this century and see what comes of it. Remember what was the condition of woman's opportunities for education in that day. It is astonishing to find how little was done for educating girls in the early century here in New England. Massachusetts of course led the states in organizing the common school system, but remember that even Boston did not allow girls to attend public schools until 1790 and then only during summer months when the boys were absent and so until 1820, and Northampton, our shire town, did not admit them until two years later. Four years previously it had voted "that this town shall not be at any expense for schooling girls." There were of course some private schools for girls and some excellent schools where an academic training could be had, like Mrs. Willard's at Troy, a famous school, and Catharine Beecher's at Hartford. But such were very few and very expensive. It is almost impossible to believe, did not history record the facts, that Massachusetts was so restricted in her early educational policy, so blind in discriminating against woman and so slow in appreciating the sources of her future strength. In 1836, when the charter was given to Mount Holyoke, there were one hundred and twenty colleges in the United States for men,—one of these, Oberlin, just beginning a coeducational system,—but there was not a single college for women either in the United States, or in England, or in the world.

Is it any wonder that Mary Lyon's heart was stirred within her and that she began planning and praying and working for a day of better things? But she met with enough opposition and discouragement, opposition from her own sex, opposition from fellow-teachers, like Catha-

rine Beecher who thought her plans utterly impracticable, opposition from trusty advisers and friends whom she had counted on to help her.

She wrote of some of these sharp criticisms: "No one can be more sensitive to such criticisms. I feel them keenly, but" she adds "I receive them as a severe yet indispensable test of my character." And always as one says who knew her, there would be a brief struggle, then a smile and the gentle remark, "Well, we will go on."

She was persevering with a divine persistence. Her own labors were heroic and incessant. "She went from house to house and town to town, over the rugged hills in winter's cold and summer's heat to create an interest in the education of girls." A contribution of a few cents encouraged her; of dollars inspired her to more heroic efforts. She cheerfully bore the taunts of men and the lethargy of women and still persevered. Her mother told a neighbor: "Mary will not give up. She just walks the floor, and says over and over again when all is so dark, 'Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him and he shall bring it to pass.' Women *must* be educated,—they *must* be!"

There was a remarkable infusion of sanctified common-sense in all her planning, as we look back and consider it again at this day. It was this very thing that prejudiced her in some minds of that day,—she had too much common-sense and logic and business sagacity for a woman.

This was her thought for her college, Why not avowedly make this a distinctively Christian enterprise "for Christ and the Church," as Harvard was originally founded "Christo et Ecclesiae?" Why not have it founded and

supported, not by the few gifts of the rich, but as the missionary enterprises of the church, by the many but free-will offerings of the people? Why not insist upon teachers who shall consecrate themselves to the work as they would to a foreign field and who shall be given, not ample compensation, but merely their support? Why not give to the whole institution the spirit of self-sacrifice and benevolence,—patrons, teachers, pupils—all of the same spirit, working for each other and for God?

It was a daring but splendid conception. It outdid in its demands for self-sacrifice and absolute consecration anything that had heretofore been conceived in collegiate institutions. Many of the most prominent educators thought it was visionary and impractical. It would be impossible to get the self-sacrificing teachers; it would be impossible to mingle household work with educational without detriment; it would be a lowering of educational ideals to underpay teachers and to give pupils their education at such a nominal figure. But Mary Lyon had faced every problem carefully and prayerfully, and she had made up her mind that it was *right* and therefore *possible*.

This was the most prominent feature of the plan: "I am convinced" she says "that, to give the first impulse to this work something tangible must be presented, must be made to stand out in *bold relief*. For this purpose we have chosen *the reduction of expenses*, . . . every step we take proves it a good selection." Here is wise advertising as well as singular wisdom in benevolence.

And this was her further method. "I am convinced" she writes "there are but two ways to accomplish our object. First, to interest a few wealthy men to do the

whole; or second, to interest the whole New England community, beginning with the country population and in time receiving the co-operation of the more wealthy of our cities. Each of these modes would have its advantages. The first could be done sooner and with comparatively little labor. The second requires more time and labor; but if accomplished, a salutary impression would be made on the whole of New England." Mark you! is there not something of the spirit of a statesman in this planning?

She knew the common people of New England, she was sure that her plan would commend itself to their common sense. She was convinced that her plan was wise; that others would soon come to see it that way; she felt herself deeply moved to do this work and bear its burdens, and she went ahead.

She not only knew the common people, but she loved them. She wrote: "My thoughts have turned, not to the higher, not to the poorer, but to the middle classes, which contain the main-springs and main wheels which are to move the world." Again she wrote: "My heart has yearned over the young women in the common walks of life, till it has sometimes seemed as though a fire were shut up in my bones."

The address to the public issued in 1835 among other things said: "The seminary is to be placed on such a basis that all its advantages may be within the reach of those in the common walks of life. Indeed it is this class principally, who are the glory of our nation, that we seek to help. The wealthy can provide for themselves, and though we expect to offer advantages which even they cannot now command, yet it is not for their sakes that we

erect this seminary. We intend it to be . . . so valuable that the rich will be glad to attend it, and so economical that people in moderate circumstances may be equally accommodated. We expect that distinctions founded on wealth will find no place within its walls any more than at the table of Jesus Christ."

It is most interesting in all this to remember that Amherst influences counted largely in her life and plans, and that Amherst friends were her most valued advisers.

She had spent a year at the Amherst Academy in 1818 when she was getting her education.

She had spent some time in the family of Edward Hitchcock then a pastor at Conway and with him had studied natural science and with his wife something of drawing and painting.

She had spent the winter of 1834 in Amherst, attending college lectures, reviewing natural sciences and chemistry and talking over her plans and projects. She had Amherst College constantly in mind as her inspiration. "*Its* funds were collected," ran a letter of hers to Miss Grant, "not from the rich, but from liberal Christians in common life." The institution and ground of Mount Pleasant here in town were the site selected in 1834 for the new institution, but the negotiations were not completed.

And as the most important Amherst influence—she had constantly as her helper and adviser the wise and energetic President Hitchcock of Amherst who had been her adviser in her work for so many years and was to be her councillor until she finished her tasks and who was destined after her death to write that memoir of her which has been such a rich legacy and fruitful inspiration. Whenever there was an emergency, it is related she would

say: "I must consult my good friend Dr. Hitchcock." His last visit to the seminary was on the 25th anniversary and his appropriate words to the school were those so often on his lips "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure."

III.

Mount Holyoke has the singular good fortune to be an institution dominated by the pervading spirit of a unique and great personality. There is perhaps no other American institution that so feels the ever-present life and example of its founder. John Harvard is a picturesque, shadowy figure, but not a potent personality to Cambridge. Ezra Cornell is a philanthropist but not a stimulating force to the Ithaca university. Matthew Vassar is a benefactor but far from an ideal to the young women of the college of his foundation. But Mary Lyon is felt in every pulse-beat of Mount Holyoke. She has given herself forever to the place,—her spirit is the living and uplifting atmosphere of the college. The influence of her rare life over the South Hadley college is like the life of Dr. Arnold at Rugby. He was the inspirer of more noble lives than any man of his age. She also was an inspirer, an awakener of dormant nobleness and of sleeping spirituality. She has been a great spiritual teacher as well as an energetic educational force in thousands of lives.

Amherst and Mount Holyoke have splendid traditions to inspire and to maintain. Might it not be well, that one of the requirements for admission to Amherst College should be an examination on that classic and inspiring "History of the College" by Dr. Tyler? And in the same way, if the splendid spirit of

the Mount Holyoke institution is to be maintained, should not every young woman seeking admission be familiar both with the memoir of Mary Lyon by President Hitchcock and the most suggestive "History of the First Fifty Years" by Mrs. Stowe? Any student who loses this inner glimpse loses a large inspiration toward the best education.

Mary Lyon was ideas, principles incarnate. And these she had the remarkable gift of incorporating successfully and permanently into her college.

We may say that three things stand out most prominently in the Mount Holyoke spirit or ideal: First, the family ideal; second, plain living and high thinking; and third, a genuine religion.

The first ideal, the family ideal, was the heart of the institution, perhaps its most distinctive feature. It involved not only loving fellowship, personal intimacies, but also household service. This was a distinctive feature in the system and taken altogether an exceedingly wise one. "Only honor," as Miss Lyon saw, "lies in mutual ministries of comfort and service and there is no dishonor in waiting on one's self. Such ministry and self-service from a worthy motive ennobles any labor."

The second ideal, plain living and high thinking, was the body and brain of the institution, its worldly wisdom and its divine sagacity. It aimed to give and it did give the highest possible education at the lowest possible cost. The figures seem impossible but are true that at the start and for a number of years the college gave board and tuition for \$60 a year. The average rate of the whole time of the college's existence has been about \$110 a year. And now in these days when the price of every-

thing has so advanced, the cost of a year at Mount Holyoke is about \$250 only half or a third as much as other colleges. Surely it is cheaper for many a bright girl to go to South Hadley than to stay at home.

The third ideal, a genuine religion, was the soul of the institution, its motive power and its highest aspiration. The college was tremendously religious, not largely, not intensely, but tremendously religious. The religious atmosphere was so pervading that there was no escape. It was quickening or killing. There were no Laodiceans in South Hadley. It made either infidels or tremendous Christians. Perhaps a few of the former. Certainly a great and noble throng of the latter. Almost all of the six thousand who have touched Mount Holyoke have become strong and earnest Christians.

The religious life manifested itself chiefly in three ways,—in earnest Bible study, in a strict and wholesome discipline and in an intense missionary spirit.

First, the Bible was the book of the house. Its study was as thorough and systematic as in literature and science. Its lessons were the first work every day. Its precepts were in constant use. Miss Lyon was especial fervent in prayer to be guided in Bible instruction—that every word might be from her heart and be the truth of God. And these hours with the Word were marvellously blessed. They fashioned devout hearts and strong Christian character. The students who came forth from Mount Holyoke may not have been tailor-made girls; but they were certainly Bible-built women.

Then the discipline was a part of the religious life. It was aimed to show that the daily discipline was all in the law of God and the love of Christ. This was the

thought, "We live unto God," "we are members one of another," and "if one member suffers, all suffer." The discipline was strict and stern. There were blue laws—good and wholesome but these have been exaggerated in tradition and have given South Hadley the reputation of being narrow. All the strict discipline however did the students no harm and for some of them it did an incalculable amount of good. Might not something more of such a discipline be a wholesome thing for our college girls and boys to-day?

The other phase of the religious life was an intense missionary zeal. Notice how this manifested itself. For the first seven years, those students gave \$7000 to foreign missions and this in spite of special needs with a new building and furnishings and every one practising the most rigid economy. This is a remarkable record for a hundred college girls. How was it possible for them to do it? It was all Miss Lyon's contagious example. Another thing, for fifteen years, with the exceptions of one year, the graduating class never failed to send one or more of its members to the foreign field. Still Miss Lyon said that they were not doing enough and at one missionary prayer-meeting she pressed the matter of personal sacrifice so earnestly upon them that six out of her twelve teachers offered themselves for the foreign work. This was more than she had expected, but ungrudgingly she sent them with a hearty Godspeed.

How did they do such things? Because the spirit in all their ideals was *sacrifice*. This was the deepest note of the institution. This was Mary Lyon's own spirit. She said: "If I had a thousand lives, I would sacrifice them all in suffering for this work. Did I possess the

greatest fortune I would readily relinquish it all and become poor, if the prosperity of this work demanded it." And never would she accept a salary of more than \$200 a year and more than half of this found its way back into the treasury of the Lord. This spirit she infused into her fellow teachers. Dr. Tyler who has been on the board of trustees for thirty-five years or more, bears witness that the teachers at Mount Holyoke have done more and better work with less pay and less grumbling, nay, with more Christian gladness and singleness of heart than any other body of teachers within the range of his acquaintance.

Only the other day I heard one say who speaks out of a full acquaintance with this and other institutions: "There is no more heroic loyalty in the world than has been shown by the teachers and alumnae of Mount Holyoke."

It was told me that not long ago the teachers were getting such small salaries that the trustees rather repented. Such teachers could get \$1500 to \$2000 or more elsewhere, so the trustees raised the salaries. Immediately the teachers protested and refused, they asserted that the money was more needed in the work of the seminary. This is something of heroic sacrifice. And such sacrifices make possible many things. Of course, the girls of Mount Holyoke can be educated at a low figure, if teachers can be had for almost nothing and then if the girls do some part of their own household work.

It is true, is it not, that the immediate end of education is service, while the ultimate end is fulness of being? The first of these is thoroughly recognized at Mount Holyoke. Service is the immediate end of all their education. And

the second part, as far as I can read and learn, has not been entirely neglected. The fulness, richness, variety, pleasures of being are recognized and emphasized. President Hitchcock once called it a "whole-woman-making institution." And so it was and is. Fulness of being, sympathy with the infinite life of God's heart and world is the ultimate thought of all its work.

The spirit and principles of Mount Holyoke College were great and wise in their inception; they were also great and wise in their self-perpetuating and diffusive power.

As soon as Mount Holyoke was successfully launched, the idea and work spread like a prairie fire. And not only has Mount Holyoke been the inspiration of hundreds of institutions that have been founded for woman's higher education in varying lines from it, but one remarkable fact: It has planted a score or more of institutions that *exactly* reproduce its lineaments and spirit. There are Mount Holyokes in other places, in the west, from Ohio to California, in Persia, in Spain, in South Africa. So Rome in the old days planted its colonies,—little sections of Rome itself,—in the most distant provinces. Mr. Durant a trustee of Mount Holyoke, in founding Wellesley to reproduce many of the characteristic features of Mount Holyoke used to say "There is no danger of having too many Mount Holyokes." The spirit of Mount Holyoke has gone forth in marvellous way. It has been the radiating center of an educational and spiritual force that has splendidly touched and quickened the most distant parts of the world.

IV.

This is the astonishing, the epochal thing about Mount Holyoke College. It was absolutely a new departure. It followed no traditions from the old world as did the men's colleges. It was not merely the first woman's college for the Connecticut valley, for Massachusetts, for America. It was the first woman's college for the world. It was the first beginning of a new era in the rights of education for woman.

This we must bear in mind. That from its inception, Mount Holyoke was, in its breadth of view, its largeness and thoroughness of curriculum, its life and purpose a *college*. It was so in all of Mary Lyon's planning and working, in all her thoughts and ambitions. It was to be equal in every particular with the best men's colleges. The name *seminary* was both a bit of womanly modesty and also of diplomatic wisdom in deference to the legislative requirements for a charter. It was to be, as Mary Lyon says, for the work of furnishing teachers of the best education and self-denying zeal. It was to be permanent, continuing onward in its enlarging work from generation to generation. It was for the safety of the nation that she was interested, the welfare of the church, the good of the world.

Strange it is,—these ideals for which she contended and labored so earnestly now seem so just and reasonable that we wonder that they were ever deemed an innovation or that they ever excited serious opposition. But "it was Mary Lyon's privilege and her glory that she saw the opportunity to which others were blind." The noble saying is true: "The example of a hero is a legacy to the

race." And surely the legacy of the example of this woman has changed "the thinking of the race;" has given an impulse to "much of the best work" of these later times; and is destined to touch with blessing "the interests of a thousand generations."

It may be pleasant to remember that Mount Holyoke was founded in 1837 in the very year that Queen Victoria began to reign. In June next the Queen's sixtieth birthday will be celebrated; and also the sixtieth birthday of Mount Holyoke. Queen Victoria's reign has been one of splendid progress and abundant prosperity. May we not say that the reign of woman in splendid progress and abundant success began with Mount Holyoke. Victor Hugo calls this "the century of woman." The German theory, that the *ewigweibliche*,—the eternally feminine, the ever womanly,—is the receptive, the spiritual, the educative, the uplifting factor in human life has found new expression. The work which was inaugurated at South Hadley was for the better equipment and the larger service of all those who are not only the mothers, but in the most intimate and widest sense the *teachers* of the race.

There seems to me to be something larger in the event that Mary Lyon brought to pass at Mount Holyoke than we sometimes dare to imagine. We are not in danger of over-estimating it. I like to think of it in connection with another great movement in American history.

The revolutionary pamphlets that preceded the Declaration of Independence of 1776 were on "The Rights of Man" and "The Age of Reason." That outbreak had long preparation. It began five centuries before when the English barons met King John in the long meadow of

Runnemedes and forced from him the Magna Charta—the foundation and bulwark of English liberty. The contest waged through the centuries. It was in the spirit of Raleigh, Hampden, Sydney. Milton had spoken for liberty “in a prose as majestic as any passage of the *Paradise Lost*.” And when the American people declared their rights, they were only working under the noblest inspiration of the past. A thousand years were brooding over them and calling to them in “luminous events and illustrious men.” And they obeyed. It was the spirit of liberty, speaking in a people, and leading them to a dignity, strength and permanence of achievement that is our priceless heritage forever.

There seems to me something in this event at South Hadley, when we look at it in its right perspective, that bears almost as august a significance as that immortal deed of the fathers at Philadelphia. The founding of Mount Holyoke was a declaration of woman's liberties in the fullest education of the race. It was a declaration for the women of the whole world. The charter of Mount Holyoke is a Magna Charta. It came in a peaceful revolution, but it is no less astounding; for it was the advent of “The Rights of Man and *Woman*,” and “The Age of *Fullest Reason*.”

Bancroft says in his own fine way of that American Declaration of Independence: “the astonished nations, as they read that all men are created equal, started out of their lethargy, like those who have been exiles from childhood, when they suddenly hear the dimly-remembered accents of their mother-tongue.”

The founding of Mount Holyoke in like manner awakened the womanhood of the world from its lethargy.

Women everywhere started and rubbed their eyes and remembered that God had created them equal with men in heart and brain, and that the noblest education was not only their privilege but their duty.

They thronged to South Hadley. Other colleges began to spring up in New England and all over this country. All the institutions from Vassar to Bryn Mawr owe their inspiration to Mount Holyoke. At length, we see the seed taking root across the ocean in Girton and Newnham in England and even some of the German universities opening to women. At length we see our own most ancient and greatest American university, old Harvard, after two hundred and fifty years of exclusiveness unable to resist any longer, and taking Radcliffe under its fostering care and granting to it equal rights and an equal degree. This has all come about in less than sixty years. Now whether popular liberty and popular government are a success or not, the declaration was responsible for it; and whether the woman's college and higher education for women are a success or not, Mount Holyoke is responsible for its inception. Here the marvellous movement began,—began for all womanhood, began for all the world. It is a new era, an epoch of human history, a declaration, not of independence, but of equal liberties.

Perhaps we may be mistaken, perhaps we are too near in time and too much involved in interests to get the proper perspective for a just estimate, but one wonders if in the years to come this Connecticut Valley shall not be better known and more widely honored for this illustrious deed of Mary Lyon than for anything else that ever happened here.

This question comes to us, in view of the vast results: Would Mary Lyon be surprised at the growth if she saw Mount Holyoke to-day? I think not. She believed in it, she expected it, she prophesied it. Her watchwords were HOLINESS TO THE LORD,—and PROGRESS.

Mary Lyon was emphatically fifty years in advance of her time. Were she living to-day she would not be fifty years behind. The institution must not be ruled by any cold dead hand of tradition, but by a warm living spirit. Mary Lyon is still at the head and in the heart of the college, only as there is growth, progress, more abundant life. The institution must still retain its old spirit of simplicity and commonsense, of sacrifice and sanctity, but if Mary Lyon be in it still, as she is, there must be a seizing of the present providential opportunity of the calamity of fire to make an enlargement of scope and accommodation for an enlarged service.

We appreciate most thoroughly the later and the present work done by such large and vigorous institutions as Smith and Wellesley in our state, but we give special honor to Mount Holyoke as the pioneer-worker and the mother of them all and we owe her a special debt of gratitude.

No institution has ever done better work with its money; no institution has ever made every single dollar tell so well; no institution has ever had a finer educational output of alumnae and yet no institutions has received less. Money in abundance has gone into the new educational work, but little at South Hadley. Friends, the cause and work of Mount Holyoke is a cause close to the heart of the common people. They inaugurated it and they should generously sustain it.

Constantly astonishing is it to read the history of this movement and see how much the common people—the farmers and the small business men—did for the cause of education in the latter part of the last century and the beginning of this. Ideals and sacrifices were in their blood. It is a tremendous lesson to us.

They believed in these things with all their hearts and were willing to give and give again till they felt it and grew strong under it.

We need more of their spirit—we need more iron in our blood—more of a strong and tonic religion—more of the gladness of heroic sacrifice.

It is still the part of the common people, the heart and strength of the state, to sustain and enlarge this college. There has been an enlistment of rich people in various lines—such institutions as Vassar and Smith have vastly profited by these princely gifts—but Mount Holyoke has still to depend largely on the smaller gifts of those who believe in her and *love* her. She is still a college of the people, by the people, for the people. She had done, as we said, more splendid work and received less money than the other women's colleges and yet she is the mother of them all.

One may be glad for some reasons that this is so. It still lays a noble burden on the people. It still gives them a magnificent opportunity. Dr. Pearsons, a man of the people, a Chicopee physician in the old days, a personal friend of Mary Lyon, is a connecting link between the old days and the new. Let the people unite with him in seconding generously his gifts. Let everything be given with prayer, and not merely to Mount Holyoke, but to the Lord for Mount Holyoke.

Mount Holyoke college ought to be a monumental pile, worthy of the faith of its founder, worthy of the greatness of the movement that it inaugurated, worthy of the heroic people who so nobly and so self-sacrificingly began its work, worthy of the Lord in whose name and to whose glory it is forever in covenant.

HSH 25060

**END OF
TITLE**